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## THE OLD COMMENTATOR.

To see the old commentator *in situ*, we must go back a good way. He is sitting in his high-backed oaken arm-chair; the table before him is a low one, that the pile of books which he is in the habit of placing on it may not absolutely bury him; besides which, he has a fancy for stooping at his work. He has an old fur-cap upon his head, and an old fur-coat upon his shoulders. Both are dusty and worn; but both the dust and wearing have something great and venerable about them, like those upon an old well-read classic of the sixteenth century. His brow is brought down far over his eyes by constant study, and his face is full of lines; but they are the lines of toil, not of care or thought. Care he has scarcely known; and he has had too much to do with the thoughts of others, to have much call for thoughts of his own: hence his cheeks retain their plumpness, and his features and limbs their power and elasticity. His look is fixed and steady, but not bright. The natural good-humour of his mouth has been twisted into a kind of fierce docterial defiance, arising from the perpetual warfare in which he passes his life. As he looks up from the ponderous old folio, of which he appears to have mastered six pages in as many minutes, he presents to you one of those rude massive magisterial faces which Rembrandt loved to paint, and even Vandyck, that artist of kings and senators, could transfer to canvas, with an energy which he did not always exercise in the case of more dignified personages.

I must confess a peculiar fancy for the works of the old commentator, all the more that he is so utterly gone out of fashion. I am told that his observations on the classics are not what literary slang chooses to call 'critical,' which means, being interpreted, that they did not refer to metrical canons, nor trouble themselves about the niceties of moods and tenses: nor do I, for that matter. So far, we are sympathetic. I am still more sympathetic with the dry old sage in the second reproach brought against him—namely, that he twaddles—that his gossiping meanderings round and about the regions of ancient history and mythology are puerile and inane—that he cannot meet with a sentence about a god or a hero, but he must needs launch out into a lengthy prattle about all sorts of incongruous circumstances pertaining to such god or hero. Whether these things are puerile or inane, whether they are mere gossip or not, detracts not from a peculiar interest that they possess. It is the spirit of one great past age illustrated by the spirit of another. The Greek and Roman are dressed up in the professional cloak and cap of a Dutch scholar of the

sixteenth century. The effect may be somewhat incongruous, but it is at least more piquant than dressing the said Greek and Roman up in the white waistcoat and kerseymere trousers of a modern literary magnate of the university of Cambridge.

Our commentator has just laid down the seventeenth folio, which he has opened within the last hour, and taken up the eighteenth. It is wonderful how the man matches with his folio. The same massiveness, the same intensity, the same dusty respectability and uncompromising fixity of form; both of them look as if they could never shut when they were once open, and never open when they were once shut. The ancients had their golden, their silver, and their iron age; with still more justice, the moderns might have their folio, their quarto, and their octavo age. The present is eminently an octavo case—octavo in its habits, forms, and fashions. Our successors will very probably be duodecimos. But the old commentator is eminently a folio: he looks as if anything smaller would be crushed under his ponderous fingers—as if it would be lost in the immensity of matter, physical and intellectual, which he is gathering around him.

Our scholar, once seated amongst his folios, looks as if he never could rise again; but he looks round with an unexpected vivacity at the tall stalwart form which has just entered the room. It is a man richly dressed, yet with a sober hue about his somewhat solemn attire. Neither lace nor ruffles appear on his velvet doublet. You look at him, and at the first glance you set him down for a statesman; at the second, for a rich merchant, who had that day been made provost. He places himself at the table, takes up one of the books with the air of a man who is used to them, and proceeds to converse about them with such a strange mixture of the scholar, the gentleman, and the man of commerce, that you are fairly at fault to find out what he is. He is one of those chieftains of the literary class—a publisher of the seventeenth century. He takes up the manuscript on which our commentator has been engaged with the air of a man who knows all about the matter, and is quite as capable of sustaining a contest as to the real nature of the Pyrrhic dance or the Eleusinian mysteries as his learned friend. He has just come from a visit to the pope or the king of France; he has been exhibiting to them specimens of his types, and has talked with them for an hour about the details of the edition which he is about to publish after the labour of our commentator. He has read to them the dedication which he intends to prefix—one addressed to no less a personage than themselves—but in which he has addressed them with perfect freedom, not to say indifference. They

have been jesting with him about the Latinity of his phrases, a point upon which he is extremely tender, and on that account his magnificent patrons make sport with him occasionally. The pope has given him the exclusive privilege of printing his proposed great book, 'under pain of excommunication to all those who shall infringe it.' The sacred arms of the Roman hierarchy have been employed in less noble causes; but, in these degenerate days, we might perhaps smile at the publisher who guarded his copyright by an excommunication. Such, however, were in those days the usual mode of supplying the constitutional guardianship of an act of parliament; and, to say the truth, it was mere picturesque, and quite as effectual.

Our visitor has brought him a pamphlet, which he presents to our commentator; the writer of which has treated the said commentator's opinion of the form of the acropolis at Athens as 'the squalling nonsense of some effete baby.' The learned man looks at the book with perfect placidity, talks about it with unconcern, and lays it down; but as soon as his visitor is gone, he instantly seizes his pen, and adds to his notes something in this strain: 'A certain grunting pig has found fault with what we have here advanced. This intolerable cow, this essence of all that is most asinine in asses, not content with living in his own filth, which so well suits him, thinks proper to bring his messes into our garden. A kick or two will send the brute howling into his own sty.' This same 'brute' is, nevertheless, like himself, one of the great men of the age—a friend of popes and princes—their superior, in his own estimation, and one who has deserved as well of the world, in the opinion of posterity.

This tendency to furiousness of abuse is wonderfully facilitated by the enormous command which learned men of those days had of the language in which they all wrote—the Latin. Were vile words wanted, they had them without stopping, like Falstaff, 'for breath to utter.' The torrents of abuse they could pour out are perfect marvels of Latinity. Their mode of proceeding on this, as on every other occasion, is simply that of a child. The old scholar, in his business matters and in his religious matters, is just as mere a baby as he is in his controversial. In the latter, he scatters epithets as they rush into his mind, just as a child in the nursery would, if it had the same command of language. For his religion, he is pretty sure to have changed it two or three times over, without any reason which would avail with anybody but himself. It is a fact, that of the old scholars more than half changed their religion with perfect indifference, and apparently from mere whim, for they shewed none of a convert's zeal about their new creed, and in very few instances seem to have understood it. The rival opinions of Papist and Protestant are shared out among them with tolerable evenness; and the only evidence any of them shew that they ever thought on the subject, is their proneness to do what every one else is so slow to do—namely, to forsake the creed which they sucked in with their mother's milk. It would seem that their conduct was a mere childish way of proving their independence; and we really believe that, in most instances, it was nothing more.

There is another mania which has taken possession of our commentator, besides that of changing his religion: nothing will serve him but a descent from a crowned head. We remember one of his fraternity, who, not contented with claiming his descent from a sovereign prince of Italy, actually took his name—a whim which, by the way, has alone preserved that of the sovereign prince in the recollection of the world. But for the learned man, no one would ever have heard of the prince. Another declared himself an offshoot of a house which founded the imperial dynasty of Austria, and rivalled the kingly dynasty of France—

namely, the House of Burgundy. Nothing less than this will satisfy the ambition of our learned man. Why should it? Nothing less would add to his dignity. He has been accustomed to play the great man so long, that his dreams of greatness extend.

Our learned man, amongst other honours, receives a royal invitation to repair to one of the principal courts in Christendom. The invitation he receives with his wonted sense of his own dignity: he sees nothing extraordinary in the fact that kings or queens should desire to know one of the greatest men on earth. Anybody, he declares, may be a general or minister of state; but it is not given to every one to be a great commentator. If left to himself, he might very probably refuse the invitation. But his wife interferes; she has a woman's ideas about appearing at court, and is resolved to make a figure. After some hesitation whether her husband shall make his appearance in Greek pallium or a Roman toga, she cuts the knot by deciding that he shall exhibit himself in complete armour. By this means, he is the representative of all the old nations of antiquity at once; besides which, he is assuming the right to which his descent from princely lineage entitles him. The limbs, therefore, of the old scholar, stiff with long sitting, are cased in greaves and targets; his venerable head, too, for so many years cognizant of the old fur-cap, is surmounted with a brass helmet, new polished for the occasion. It was in this attire that one of the most awkward and learned of the old scholars actually appeared at the court of Christina of Sweden. If that curious personage had seen in the learned man's whim a satire on her own proceedings with learned men in general, it would have been no more than she deserved. But the learned man is guiltless of satire; nothing could make him conscious that he was playing anything but a dignified part, peculiarly becoming his position and circumstances.

In money-matters, our learned man is a perfect baby. When he first began to teach, many of his scholars, who soon found out the weak side of learning, not only omitted to pay him, but borrowed his money into the bargain, perfectly certain that he would never ask for it again. This went on till the matter became notorious; some one interfered, and the pupils were prohibited from obtaining any further supplies for their follies from this quarter. The professor finding his money accumulate, and not knowing what to do with it, took it to the gaming-table, partly to get rid of the burden, and partly from a vague idea of gaining a philosophical insight into the human character, which would enable him better to understand the Epicurean philosophy, upon which he was then writing a treatise. He got his ideas, but with them so much loss and ill fame, that he was forced to leave the town, where, said one of his admirers, he was worshipped like a god.

The *ménage* of our commentator is a curious one. Lion as he is amongst his own race, fiercely as he can repel any attack upon his theories respecting the Greek phalanx or his version of a Latin ode, he is a mere house-lamb in his own family. Socrates was not the only sage that had a Xantippe. His learned labours are carried on in the midst of a host of squalling children, whose clatter is not at all improved by the sharp tone of the mother, who is scolding and belabouring them by turns. In the first years of his union, the hapless scholar, who found more than one of his best ideas spoiled by the noise, actually did venture on a mild remonstrance, but it was received in such a manner that he never ventured upon it again. His only resource has been in his notes, wherein he pours out his whole soul to his intimate friend, the reader, to tell the said intimate friend how his lucubrations have in some instances fallen short of the mark, 'because his affectionate child would insist upon playing about his knees.' 'If I had been in his place,' observes a

learned modern upon the note, 'I should have sent young master out of the room.' Alas, how little did the modern understand the position of his renowned predecessor!

In a corner of the room are stowed away a mass of letters, of which many men might well be proud, but which our professor looks upon as a mere matter of course, and a simple tribute to his deserts. Half of them are from royal or princely personages, who have just established a new university or remodelled an old one. They write to our professor in Latin; it is a shame they do not write to him in Greek. They—the royal and princely personages—are just as fulsome in their expressions of adulation as their own flatterers; one would think that they were parodying the follies daily addressed to themselves, or that they were poking fun at the learned man. They are doing neither; they are only conforming to the general style, with a secret feeling that the learned man is more necessary to them than they are to the learned man. Princes can adopt just as mean a style as other people, when they have similar reasons for it.

In truth, our commentator cares much more about dead kings and princes than he does about live ones. He lives and breathes with the ancients; he has no other models to admire, no other authorities to quote. No specimens of good histories, of fine poetry, even of accounts of ordinary facts, existed in his day from recent pens. If a farmer talked to him about one of his sheep, his mind would instantly revert to a Greek naturalist; if his wife talked to him about a dinner—there was no *Almanach des Gourmands* in his days—all that would occur to him would be the feasts of some Roman epicure in the devouring days of the first emperors. Who can complain of his taste, if in philosophy or poetry he preferred Plato and Homer to the writings of the schoolmen or the rhyming legends of the monks! All that was worth having, knowing, or thinking about, came from antiquity. The modern scholar has a thousand things of his own day to master: there is, in the first place, the literature of modern times, which now stands in fair competition with those of the ancients; but besides this, there is a vast quantum of science, politics, philosophy, and theology which your modern professor must know, if he would not be the laughing-stock of decent society. All this was quite out of the way of our commentator. Talk to him about politics in his day, and all you would get would be a goodly shower of those epithets of 'ass, cow, swine, hedgehog,' of which he had so vast a profusion in his linguistic quiver. Modern science, to him, was made up of the freaks and follies of the alchemists—no wonder he preferred Aristotle.

He was once told that the remains of Petronius were to be found entire at Bologna. Petronius was a Latin author whom he especially admired: the old scholar had something of a hankering after loose morality. The idea of finding the entire works of an old author hitherto found only in part, put him instantly in a fever; it was one of those prizes which are rarely drawn in the literary lottery. He scarcely stayed to pack up his clothes, and journeyed day and night in winter, from the north of Germany to Bologna, where was the treasure in question. On his arrival, his first demand is if the remains of Petronius are not to be found in the city? 'Certainly: they are the glory of the place. Go to the sacristan of the church of St John.' He goes, and requests to be shewn the remains of Petronius. The sacristan takes him into the vault. 'What!' says the scholar, 'do you keep your manuscripts in the vault?' 'I don't know what manuscripts mean,' replies the sacristan; 'but here lies the body of St Petronius, our guardian saint.'

Homer says that it would take nine men of his degenerate day to lift a stone thrown by a single warrior of the heroic ages. We know not how many

men of our own time it would take to equal the labour of our commentator—certainly not less than a dozen. In truth, his were the heroic days of literature. See how the pile of manuscript grows under his indefatigable fingers! If he has sat at work less than sixteen hours in the twenty-four, he considers, like Titus, that he has lost a day. 'Fits,' says Bernard Lintot in Pope's squib against Dennis—'a man may well have fits and swollen legs who sits writing fourteen hours a day.' Alas! the degenerate days had already set in; in the time of Bernard Lintot, our commentator sat writing for sixteen hours, for six months in succession, without having fits or swollen legs. There was a time when he allowed himself only one night's rest out of three. He was warm with youth in those days, and found that he had gone too far: there are stones too heavy even for Homeric heroes. No wonder that piles of folios grow up out of his labours. No wonder that authors in those days did not print in duodecimo. Why, a single work would have required a long travel to get from one end to the other of the series; and as for the entire works of our author, it would only have been possible to reach the last volumes on horseback.

The humour of the learned man would be just as antique and dusty as everything else about him. If he goes to supper, and gets lively, he will pour out Greek epigrams by the dozen; and on going home, he will exhort his feet, in an extempore Latin distich, to keep steady under him. He has often stopped in the middle of his lecture to cook an ancient dish, by way of illustrating the meaning of his author. If he meditates a gay book, as some relief to his heavier labour, he writes the lives of the ancient cooks, illustrated by an essay on the action of the stomach on the mind, and a dissertation on the Epicurean philosophy.

Such were a race of beings more completely passed away than the high-priest of Baal in the Nineveh marbles. The last has perhaps a representative in some of the far corners of the globe; but the learned man of the sixteenth century has no representative upon the face of the earth. He has left his works as memorials of his existence, which hand him down to posterity by their weight, if by nothing else—ponderous folios, that once startled society, but are now selling for waste paper from the groaning shelves of the book-sellers. If he does meet with the classical poets and historians in the Elysian fields, how he will wrangle with them over the construction of their sentences! A meeting of the commentator and his author in the next world will certainly be a curious one. We will let this transient glimpse of the old worthy pass from us, hoping that the earth lies more lightly upon him than his own works upon it.

#### THE MOUNTAIN IN THE MAIN.

OUT in the Arctic Sea, somewhat more than 400 miles to the north-east of Iceland, there rises, apparently projected by volcanic agency, the mountain-island of Jan Mayen. It shoots straight up out of the sea to the height of nearly 7000 feet, having from certain points of view the appearance of a peak, not unlike the enormous spire of a church. As seen from a distance, it seems impossible to land upon it, yet, on approaching nearer, there is found to be a narrow line of coast, and several small harbours, which offer a tolerable anchorage when the state of the surrounding ice admits of entrance. The island was originally discovered by Captain Fotherby, who stumbled upon it through a fog in the year 1614. Sailing southward in a mist so thick that he could not see to the length of his ship, he suddenly heard the noise of waters as if breaking on a great shore, and getting a glimpse shortly afterwards of the gigantic bases of Mount Beerenberg, which is the name given to the eminence, he thought he had discovered some new continent.



Since then, it has been frequently sighted by home-ward-bound whalers, though, on account of its ordinary inaccessibility, it has rarely been landed upon. Once, however, shortly after its discovery, an attempt was made to inhabit it, that was attended by tragic consequences; the particulars of which, till recently, have been very little known.\*

About the year 1635, the Dutch government, wishing to establish a settlement in the actual neighbourhood of the fishing-grounds, where the blubber might be boiled down, and the spoils of each season transported home in the smallest bulk, prevailed on seven seamen to remain the whole winter on the island. Huts were built for them, and they were liberally supplied with salt provisions, and there left to resolve the problem as to whether or not human beings could support the severities of the climate. Standing on the shore, these seven men saw their comrades' parting sails sink down beneath the sun; then watched the sun sink as had sunk the sails; and as the long arctic night set in, must have felt themselves left to a perilous and questionable fate. As is the manner of seamen, they kept a log or diary of their proceedings, noting down from day to day what seemed most worthy or desirable to be recorded. 'The 26th of August,' they wrote, 'our fleet set sail for Holland with a strong north-east wind and a hollow sea, which continued all that night. The 28th, the wind the same; it began to snow very hard; we then shared half a pound of tobacco betwixt us, which was to be our allowance for a week. Towards evening, we went about together, to see whether we could discover anything worth our observation, but met with nothing.' To the like effect is their experience for many a weary day—cold dreary days of sleet and storm, which differ little one day from another.

On the 8th of September, they were 'frightened by a noise of something falling to the ground'—probably some volcanic disturbance, or descent of a loosened glacier. A month later, it becomes so cold that their linen, after a moment's exposure to the air, is frozen like a board. Huge fleets of ice beleaguered the island, the sun disappears, and they spend most of their time in 'rehearsing to one another the adventures that had befallen them by sea and land.' Ere long, this resource of story-telling fails, or the relation becomes bald by repetition. On the 12th of December, they have the fortune to kill a bear, having by this time begun to feel the effects of a salt diet. Slowly, dearly, the time goes by, and every day 'most weary seems the sea'—

Wearily the wandering fields of barren foam.

At last comes New-year's Day, 1636. 'After having wished each other a happy new year, and success in our enterprise, we went to prayers,' say they, 'to disburden our hearts before God.' They had yet two months to wait before the reappearance of the sun. It was some slight relief to the prolonged dulness when, on the 25th of February, they once more saw him rise. But now to dulness and the pains of cold succeed sickness and debility. By the 22d of March, they were suffering from the scourge of scurvy: 'For want of refreshments we began to be very heartless, and so afflicted that our legs are scarce able to bear us.' Alone on that dismal rock, they were 'out of humanity's reach'; slowly, miserably perishing, and in conscious dread of perishing, before help could come. On the 3d of April, there being no more than two of them in health, they killed for the others the only two pullets they had left; the sick men feeding 'pretty heartily upon them, in hopes it might prove a means to recover part of their strength.' 'We were sorry,' says the record, 'we had not a dozen more for their sake.' On Easter-day, Adrian Carman, of Schiedam, their clerk,

dies. 'The Lord have mercy upon his soul, and upon us all, we being very sick,' is the entry on this sad occasion. During the next few days, they seem all to have got rapidly worse, only one being strong enough to move about. He had learned writing from his comrades since coming to the island, and it is he who concludes the melancholy story. 'The 23d (April), the wind blew from the same corner, with small rain. We were by this time reduced to a very deplorable state, there being none of them all, except myself, that were able to help themselves, much less one another, so that the whole burden lay upon my shoulders; and I perform my duty as well as I am able, as long as God pleases to give me strength. I am just now a going to help our commander out of his cabin, at his request, because he imagined by this change to ease his pain, he then struggling with death.' For seven days this gallant fellow goes on 'striving to do his duty'—attending on his helpless comrades till they were all past help, and making entries in the journal as to the state of the weather, that being the principal object they were charged with when left upon the island; but on the 30th of April his strength too gave way, and his failing hand could do no more than trace an incomplete sentence on the page.

So, sinking one after another, the forlorn band had all fallen. As the season advanced, however, ships were getting ready; and on the 4th of June, up again above the horizon rose the sails of the Zealand fleet; but when search is made for those who it was hoped would have been found alive and well, lo! each lies dead in his own hut; one with an open prayer-book by his side; another with his hand stretched out towards the ointment he had used for his stiffened joints; and the last survivor with the unfinished journal still lying by his side.

Since this grim tragedy, Jan Mayen has had no inhabitants. Mount Beerenberg raises his head with an awful majesty above the storms, but looks down on voyaging adventurers who pass his borders with too inhospitable a frown to induce them to tarry long within his presence. Nevertheless, the island has been occasionally visited by enterprising navigators, some of whom appear to have explored it more completely than its early Dutch discoverers. Twenty-two years ago, the late Dr Scoresby effected a landing there, on his return from a whaling cruise. He had seen the mountain a hundred miles off, and, on approaching, found the coast quite free from ice; and, by a subsequent survey, ascertained that the island is about sixteen miles long by four wide. The last and most complete account of this singular sea-mountain is given us by Lord Dufferin, who went in search of it in his yacht, in the summer of 1856. The particulars are given in his recently published voyage-narrative, entitled *Letters from High Latitudes*; from which very interesting work we select such passages as may serve to complete the picture of Jan Mayen, and to shew the difficulties and dangers of approaching it.

Lord Dufferin sailed from Iceland in his schooner-yacht, the *Foam*, a little vessel of about eighty tons burden, being accompanied in his expedition by a French steamer of 1100 tons, the *Reine Hortense*, on board of which was his Imperial Highness Prince Napoleon. The prince suggested that the *Reine Hortense* should take the *Foam* in tow; and in this way upwards of 300 miles of the voyage to Jan Mayen was performed. At this point, however, the French vessel, falling short of coal, was obliged to return, leaving Lord Dufferin, who was unwilling to go back, to buffet his way forward amidst fog and ice, as well as the skill and hardihood of himself and crew, and the sailing powers of his little schooner, might enable him. 'I confess,' says he, 'our situation, too, was not altogether without causing me a little anxiety. We had not seen

\* *Letters from High Latitudes.*

the sun for two days; it was very thick, with a heavy sea, and dodging about as we had been among the ice, at the heels of the steamer, our dead reckoning was not very much to be depended upon. The best plan, I thought, would be to stretch away at once clear of the ice, then run up into the latitude of Jan Mayen, and, as soon as we should have reached the parallel of its northern extremity, bear down on the land.

The ship's course was shaped in accordance with this view, and as about mid-day the weather began to moderate, there appeared a prospect of getting on for some time favourably. By four o'clock in the afternoon, they were skimming along on a smooth sea with all sails set; and this state of prosperity continued for the next twenty-four hours. 'We had made,' says his lordship, 'about eighty knots since parting company with the Frenchman, and it was now time to run down west and pick up the land. Luckily, the sky was pretty clear, and as we sailed on through open water, I really began to think our prospects very brilliant. But about three o'clock on the second day, specks of ice began to flicker here and there on the horizon, then large bulks came floating by in forms as picturesque as ever—one, I particularly remember, a human hand thrust out of the water with outstretched forefinger, as if to warn us against proceeding further—until at last the whole sea became clouded with hummocks, that seemed to gather on our path in magical multiplicity.

'Up to this time, we had seen nothing of the island, yet I knew we must be within a very few miles of it; and now, to make things quite pleasant, there descended upon us a thicker fog than I should have thought the atmosphere capable of sustaining: it seemed to hang in solid festoons from the masts and spars. To say that you could not see your hand, ceased almost to be any longer figurative; even the ice was hid—except those fragments immediately adjacent, whose ghastly brilliancy the mist itself could not quite extinguish, as they glimmered round the vessel like a circle of luminous phantoms. The perfect stillness of the sea and sky added very much to the solemnity of the scene; almost every breath of wind had fallen; scarcely a ripple tinkled against the copper sheathing as the solitary little schooner glided along at the rate of half a knot or so an hour, and the only sound we heard was a distant wash of waters; but whether on a great shore, or along a belt of solid ice, it was impossible to say. At last, about four in the morning, I fancied some change was going to take place; the heavy wreaths of vapour seemed to be imperceptibly separating, and in a few minutes more the solid roof of gray suddenly split asunder, and I beheld through the gap—thousands of feet overhead, as if suspended in the crystal sky—a cone of illuminated snow.

'You can imagine my delight. It was really that of an anchorite catching a glimpse of the seventh heaven. There at last was the long-sought-for mountain actually tumbling down upon our heads. Columbus could not have been more pleased when, after nights of watching, he saw the first fires of a new hemisphere dance upon the water; nor, indeed, scarcely less disappointed at their sudden disappearance than I was, when, after having gone below to wake Sigurd, and tell him we had seen *bonâ-fide* terra firma, I found, on returning upon deck, that the roof of mist had closed again, and shut out all trace of the transient vision. At last the hour of liberation came: a purer light seemed gradually to penetrate the atmosphere; brown turned to gray, and gray to white, and white to transparent blue, until the lost horizon entirely reappeared, except where in one direction an impenetrable veil of haze still hung suspended from the zenith to the sea. Behind that veil I knew must lie Jan Mayen.

'A few minutes more, and slowly, silently, in a manner you could take no count of, its dusky hem first deepened to a violet tinge, then gradually lifting, displayed a long line of coast—in reality but the roots of Beerenberg—dyed of the darkest purple; while, obedient to a common impulse, the clouds that wrapped its summit standing in all the magnificence of his 6870 feet, girdled by a single zone of pearly vapour, from underneath whose floating folds seven enormous glaciers rolled down into the sea! Nature seemed to have turned scene-shifter, so artfully were the phases of this glorious spectacle successively developed.

'Although—by reason of our having hit upon its side instead of its narrow end—the outline of Mount Beerenberg appeared to us more like a sugar-loaf than a spire—broader at the base and rounder at the top than I had imagined—in size, colour, and effect it far surpassed anything I had anticipated. The glaciers were quite an unexpected element of beauty. Imagine a mighty river of as great a volume as the Thames, started down the side of a mountain, bursting over every impediment, whirled into a thousand eddies, tumbling and raging from ledge to ledge in quivering cataracts of foam, then suddenly struck rigid by a power so instantaneous in its action, that even the froth and fleeting wreaths of spray have stiffened to the immutability of sculpture. Unless you had seen it, it would be almost impossible to conceive the strangeness of the contrast between the actual tranquillity of these silent crystal rivers and the violent descending energy impressed upon their exterior. You must remember, too, all this is upon a scale of such prodigious magnitude, that when we succeeded, subsequently, in approaching the spot—where, with a leap like that of Niagara, one of these glaciers plunges down into the sea—the eye, no longer able to take in its fluvial character, was content to rest in simple astonishment at what then appeared a lucent precipice of gray-green ice, rising to the height of several hundred feet above the masts of the vessel.'

As soon as they had got a little over their first feelings of astonishment at the panorama thus suddenly revealed by the lifting of the fog, Lord Dufferin and his companions began to consider what would be the best way of getting to the anchorage on the west side of the island. They were still seven or eight miles from the shore, and the northern extremity of the island, round which they would have to pass, lay about five leagues off, bearing west by north, while between them and the land stretched a continuous breadth of floating ice. We need not detail all the elaborate manœuvres by which they worked the vessel among the hummocks; finding, more than once, after making some little progress by arduous efforts, that there was 'no thoroughfare' in the direction chosen, and nothing was left them but to return back, and try their fortune through some other passage. They could effect no landing on the western coast; they put about and tried the eastern, and had no better success. Worse than this, on attempting to retrace their course, they found themselves in danger of being ice-locked. The wind having shifted, it was now blowing right down the path along which they had picked their way; and in order to return, it would be necessary to work the ship to windward 'through a sea as thickly crammed with ice as a lady's boudoir is with furniture.' 'Moreover,' says the noble navigator, 'it had become evident, from the obvious closing of the open spaces, that some considerable pressure was acting upon the outside of the field; but whether originating in a current or the change of wind, or another field being driven down upon it, I could not tell. Be that as it might, out we must get, unless we wanted to be cracked like a walnut-shell between the drifting ice and the solid belt to leeward; so, sending a steady hand to the helm—for these unusual phenomena

had begun to make some of my people lose their heads a little, no one on board having ever seen a bit of ice before—I stationed myself in the bows, while Mr Wyse [the sailing-master] conned the vessel from the square-yard. Then there began one of the prettiest and most exciting pieces of nautical manoeuvring that can be imagined. Every single soul on board was summoned upon deck; to all, their several stations and duties were assigned, always excepting the cook, who was merely directed to make himself generally useful. As soon as everybody was ready, down went the helm, about came the ship, and the critical part of the business commenced. Of course, in order to wind and twist the schooner in and out among the devilous channels left between the hummocks, it was necessary she should have considerable way on her; at the same time, so narrow were some of the passages, and so sharp their turnings, that unless she had been the most handy vessel in the world, she would have had a very narrow squeak for it. I never saw anything so beautiful as her behaviour. Had she been a living creature, she could not have dodged, and wound, and doubled with more conscious cunning and dexterity; and it was quite amusing to hear the endearing way in which the people spoke to her, each time the nimble creature contrived to elude some more than usually threatening tongue of ice.

'It had become very cold; so cold, indeed, that Mr Wyse—no longer able to keep a clutch of the rigging—had a severe tumble from the yard on which he was standing. The wind was freshening, and the ice was evidently still in motion; but although very anxious to get back again into open water, we thought it would not do to go away without landing, even if it were only for an hour. So having laid the schooner right under the cliff, and putting in the gig our old discarded figure-head, a white ensign, a flag-staff, and a tin biscuit-box, containing a paper on which I had hastily written the schooner's name, the date of her arrival, and the names of all those who sailed on board, we pulled ashore. A ribbon of beach, not more than fifteen yards wide, composed of iron sand, augite, and pyroxene, running along under the basaltic precipice—upwards of a thousand feet high—which serves as a kind of plinth to the mountain, was the only standing-room this part of the island afforded. With considerable difficulty, and after a good hour's climb, we succeeded in dragging the figure-head we had brought on shore with us, up a sloping patch of snow, which lay in a crevice of the cliff, and thence a little higher, to a natural pedestal formed by a broken shaft of rock; where, after having tied the tin box round her neck, and duly planted the white ensign of St George beside her, we left the superseded damsel, somewhat grimly smiling across the frozen ocean at her feet, until some Bacchus of a bear shall come to relieve the loneliness of my wooden Ariadne.'

Meeting with nothing of interest, they soon determined to return to the vessel; 'but—so rapidly was the ice drifting down upon the island—we found it had already become doubtful whether we should not have to carry the boat over the patch which, during the couple of hours we had spent on shore, had almost cut her off from access to the water. If this was the case with the gig, it was very evident the quicker we got the schooner out to sea again the better. So immediately we returned on board, having first fired a gun in token of adieu to the desolate land we should never again set foot on, the ship was put about, and our task of working out towards the open water recommenced.' It was a difficult matter to get extricated from the ice; but after many hours' struggling, the little *Foam* got free from it, and went spanking away at the rate of eight knots an hour in a direct line for Hammerfest—a port which was gained after eight days' sailing, at the rate of 100 miles a day.

The reader who has followed us thus far will know as much of Jan Mayen and its history as is known by anybody who has not visited the island. As Lord Dufferin himself only knew of its existence four years before he went in search of it, there can be no reason why anybody should blush for the deficiency of his geographical knowledge, should this be the first time he may have heard of it. Though one of the curiosities of the world, Jan Mayen has been so rarely visited, that few persons, even among arctic mariners, could render any account of it; and the belief has been current in some quarters that for many years it has been wholly inaccessible. M. Babinet, of the French Institute, made a statement to this effect in the *Journal des Débats*, as lately as the 30th of December 1856—he, apparently, having not then received intelligence of Lord Dufferin's exploit in the previous summer. It is now, however, an established fact that the island can be reached; and it is not unlikely that other spirited yachtsmen, emulating his lordship's bold example, will seek a new excitement in making it the object of some of their seafaring excursions.

### A CHEAP TRAIN.

'WELL, Fred., and where are you going to? You're never very locomotive, I know; but you're surely never intending to run yourself to seed here all the autumn, browsing, Nebuchadnezzarlike, among the grass crops of modern Babylon, in September.'

The speaker was my friend Mr Spooner; the occasion, an evening visit with which he favoured me, in Pumphandle Court, in the early part of the present month. The air of quiet self-complacency with which this rather flippant address was associated, induced me to surmise that its object was rather to elicit some evidence of curiosity on my part as to his own plans, than to obtain information in regard to mine; and I rejoined, therefore, in the true spirit of friendship, by a similar inquiry.

'Well, do you know, I rather think of cutting over to Paris by "the cheap train,"' was the reply, enunciated with a glibness which agreeably confirmed my impression of my own sagacity. 'It's too late for Scotland'—this was a piece of gentle swagger, Mr Spooner's foot never having pressed the 'native hills' of the grouse in his life, and his acquaintance with that bird being exclusively a dinner-table one—'and too early for Brighton; and I've got an odd ten-pound note, with which I calculate—with management and economy, and that's the true secret of enjoyment, mind you—I shall be able to knock out a fortnight very jolly.'

Never having had the good-fortune to perceive in my acquaintance with my friend, any particular evidence that management and economy were his peculiar forte, my curiosity as to his plans was rather awakened.

'Yes, I've got a return-ticket—two pound there and back, or something of that sort; third class and a carpet-bag, you know. Nobody knows me; and I'm not proud,' he continued—rather defiantly, it struck me, for so true a philosopher. 'Bedroom in the marais. Breakfast, a cup of coffee and some fried potatoes. Palais Royal dinner, two francs fifty, with half a bottle of "Macon vieux," eh! and the thing's done, you know. As for amusement, bless you, I shan't want any knocking about. They translate so close up in England now-a-days, that there'll be nothing at the theatres I shan't be able to see here between now and January, with the advantage of understanding it; and there's the Louvre and the singing cafés, and lots of fun to be had in Paris for nothing.'

A recollection of an amiable weakness on my friend's part for little dinners, and the relaxations, not always inexpensive, of Cremorne and M. Laurent's



*conversazioni*, induced me the more highly to appreciate the self-denial with which he proposed to associate the enjoyment of foreign travel; and after I had inspected his passport, which, embellished and ratified as it was by two engraved coats of arms, and the signature of Lord Clarendon's private secretary, he appeared to regard as a sort of pocket palladium—our colloquy terminated.

A few days ago, I chanced to encounter Mr Spooner at a popular dining establishment on the confines of Westendia, and was gratified to observe, from a downy moustache, and a new scarf-pin of unmistakably Parisian origin, that the proposed trip had been duly accomplished.

'Ah, Fred,' he observed, when he saw me, 'shady place this, after Vefour's and the Café de Paris. Pretty notions we have of dining in England. Waiter! look here—get me some more saddle of mutton, and the currant jelly, and a pint of Bordeaux.'

'It's ill talking,' says the proverb, 'between a full man and a fasting;' so having completed my own modest two shillings' worth, I proposed hearing the details of my friend's excursion when he had completed his, and adjourned to the smoking-room, whither he soon followed me.

'By Jove, Fred., this won't do, mind ye, after Philippe's: I can't stand this two-shilling business now; as for the Bordeaux, it's not drinkable. Bonaparte, Hannibal, or whoever it was, might have cut through Mont St Bernard with it. It's as sour as vinegar, I give you my honour; it's only fit to make salad dressing or sauce piquante.'

I hinted that the choice vintages of France, of which he seemed to have acquired so keen an appreciation, were not as yet attainable in this country at three shillings a bottle; and then inquired the particulars of his trip, the economy of which impressed me the more from the valuable experiences *in re prandiarum* which, notwithstanding, he appeared to have derived from it. I give them, to do him justice, in his own words.

'Well, sir, I started the morning after I saw you, and got down to Boulogne very jolly by the middle of the day.'

I had thought the 'cheap train' went by the Dieppe or Newhaven route.

'Well, yes. But you see, when it came to the point, I thought, you know, that what with the time it would take on the journey, and the additional eating and drinking—we must consider all these things—I shouldn't save much; so I sold my ticket to Tom Wye or Wake for a pound, and concluded to go down comfortable.'

'I see. First class—express.'

'Yes. I wanted, besides, to see Amiens cathedral, which I should have missed by the other routes.'

Mr Spooner, I feel bound to remark, had never before evinced, to my knowledge, the most remote interest in or desire to make himself acquainted with the mysteries of church architecture.

'Well,' he continued, 'I got down very well, and, mind you, it's much the pleasantest way of doing the thing, put up at the Hôtel des Bains, and had a stunning fricandeau and a bottle of Burgundy. Better for a fellow to begin with Burgundy before he gets on to claret; and Beaune's a good half-way house between sherry and Château Lafitte.'

I admired my friend's perspicacity; told him so, and he continued.

'Well, sir, I started for Paris the next morning.'

'Third class?'

'Why, no. I had fully intended now to have begun economising; but the fact is, I travelled from London with some remarkably nice people, who were going to winter at Rome; and after passing one day with the family, I couldn't make up my mind to the society for

the next of the courier and lady's-maid. Besides, upon consideration, I thought it better not to fatigue myself. There's no economy, you know, in a fellow fatiguing himself; and as they charge extra for luggage, and allow you precious little in the third class, that, you see, would have made a difference.'

'To the family who were going to winter at Rome, I dare say; but you were only going to take a carpet-bag, weren't you?'

'Well, I was; but I thought, upon consideration, I had better go comfortable, and a fellow must have clothes wherever he is; so I got some new toggery, and a box or two of cigars—for there's no standing those five sous weeds in Paris—so that what with one thing and what with another, I had rather more luggage than I had intended.'

'And Amiens cathedral?'

'Oh! I was obliged to cut that, and got into Paris about six o'clock, after a remarkably pleasant day with the remarkably pleasant family. *Pater familias* very civil, and said they should be happy to renew the acquaintance. Uncommon nice connection, mind you, and worth the difference between first and third class fare any day.'

'Perhaps so, if the family had been going to winter in London instead of Rome. As it was, the investment was perhaps hardly so good. However, get on.'

'When I got to Paris, I cut 'em, and determined then to begin doing the economical. By the way, they were no end of civil at Boulogne about the cigars. Depend upon it, if I had not been travelling like a gentleman, I should have had nobody knows what duty to pay for 'em at the custom-house, and there would have been a further expense. True economy, my dear Fred., must be discriminating.'

I yielded my fullest concurrence to this proposition.

'Well, sir, I soon routed out a cheap hotel; and thus ended my second day.'

Mr Spooner now fell to his Bordeaux, the demerits of which he had apparently forgotten, and then continued:

'I was up pretty early the next morning, and paid my hotel bill.'

'Cheap?'

'Well, to say the truth, it wasn't. I suspect, if you are vagabondising for only a night at an hotel, the best is the best; but one must carry out one's principles.'

'With discrimination,' I ventured to suggest.

'Quite so. With discrimination, of course. Well, the next day I devoted to lodging-hunting, and a pretty turn I had of it, for I was resolved now to begin to economise, and secure the right thing cheap, you know. At length, I hit upon it; and after nearly losing the thing by sticking out for attendance included, found myself the proprietor of an apartment with a sloping roof, a cracked glass over the chimney-piece, a cracked marble table, a cracked marble washing-stand, a bed with a game leg, and a *chiffonnier* that wouldn't shut—for seven francs a week. Not bad that, I think.'

'Economical enough, in all conscience. What then?'

'Why, then, I went off to the Palais Royal to get some dinner.'

'I see: two francs fifty!'

'Well, I had intended; but it was rather late for Richard's, and having unluckily to pass the Trois Frères Provençaux—'

'You very naturally turned in there.'

'Why, to confess the truth, I did, for having, you see, made such a cheap arrangement for my lodging, I thought I might indulge a little.'

'Exactly: *bisque* and a cutlet à la Provençale.'

'Well, something of the kind, I must admit.'

'And a *plomberie*, perhaps, with a little dry *Sillery*.'

'Well, I had a little ice-pudding and some champagne, certainly.'

'To be sure. And then?'

'Nothing else, upon my honour, except a little Chambertin to top up with, and some black coffee and maraschino. Home to bed, and spoiled a new hat, by the way, against the ceiling going in.'

'So much for the economy of a *mansarde* at seven francs a week; but the principle is the thing.'

The further detail of Mr Spooner's experiences, though interesting to me, might scarcely prove as entertaining to the world at large. Suffice it to say, that they all exhibited more or less the same disproportionate mixture of the mean and the magnificent; the same 'cheap train' of idea, and profusion in practice, with which he seemed to have initiated them. His home for the day had cost him a *franc*; his dinner, ten! He had economised, by avoiding the Italian Opera, to spend twice the saving in bouquets and pistol-shots at the Salle Valentino! He had expended as much in overproof brandy, which made him ill, to see nothing of life, at a dingy wine-shop in the Rue Traversine, as would have given him a very fair glimpse of its reality at the Variétés! He had not been able to join three English friends at an excursion to Versailles, because he had treated as many Frenchmen, whom he knew and cared nothing about, to supper and rum-punch the night before at the Bal Bullien.

How Mr Spooner wrote home for some more money on the Friday of his first week, fasting that day, and indeed the following, with a severity which would doubtless have infinitely gratified the ecclesiastical authorities of the district, it is painful to me to record; how, upon his 'resumption of cash-payments,' he revelled afterwards, I need not detail. Suffice it to say, that he arrived at London Bridge on the tenth day from that on which he had taken leave of it, with only a twenty centime piece in his pocket, and disturbed the parental home ungracefully at two o'clock in the morning for the payment of his cab.

'And what's the dreariest part of the whole thing, Fred,' my friend concluded, 'I don't think somehow, upon my honour, that I really enjoyed myself. I don't know how it was, but I suspect that I got wrong at the beginning, and was never able somehow to work round again. It's a bad plan, mark ye, for a fellow to alter his arrangements when he has once made them. I do believe—I give you my word—that if it hadn't been for the going down first class, in the first instance, I should have done the thing as I told you with the ten pounds, and jolly too!'

During the enjoyment of the solitary half hour which succeeded the conversation I have detailed, I endeavoured to reduce Mr Spooner's experiences to something like a principle, which resolved itself finally into this: that nothing in life is easier than a 'cheap train' of ideas, but that its development into the desirable results which are its ultimate object, can only be secured by as much careful forethought and practical self-denial as are required for other things. Sure it seemed to me that the best designs for economy on the occasion of an autumn tour or any other, if not carried out practically *ab initio*, are scarcely likely to develop themselves subsequently, such operations of nature, like most others, bearing fruit of the seed originally sown 'after its kind.'

Mr Spooner, though not wiser than his neighbours—and there was probably no reason why he should be so—was perhaps, after all, not much less wise than many of them. Half the world of us who do claim to see a little beyond our noses, are as prolific in 'cheap trains' of idea born to die, as that honest but unsuccessful young philosopher. Edwin and Angelina, for instance, agreeing that it is not worth while to wait any longer—and quite right too—make their start in life with 'cheap trains' illimitable of ideal economy; commencing with a wedding which, for luxury of detail, might serve

as a prelude to L.3000 a year instead of L.300; and appliances for the adornment and glorification of 'The Hermitage, Kensington Gravel Pits,' which would not discredit the 'splendid family mansion, adapted to a nobleman or gentleman,' in Palace Gardens, to which they are not without hopes—for these are days of ambition—of some day attaining, and which they are inaugurating a system of life so ingeniously calculated to secure. Alas! the twelvemonth is not over before Angelina, with *modes* enough in her *trousseau* to furnish a shop, is sighing over the labours of a home-made *bassinnet*; and Edwin, regardless of the delight of the Hermitage, is converting that bower of bliss into a pandemonium to himself and everybody else, because butcher's meat is ninepence a pound instead of sevenpence. With ten years more experience, we shall find the gentle pair developing the more matured views of the same system of domestic economy, by giving careful dinners, which you and I who eat them know they cannot afford, and saving to make up for them by the educational establishments of Monsieur Patois and Madame Pailon, Rue des Enfants Trouvés, Boulogne-sur-Mer, where there are no extras, few holidays, and the living is as light as the terms, for Frank and Fanny. While further still, could we penetrate the mists of half a century, we might see them, though

Soon that year maun come

Will bring 'em to their last,

developing further fruits of the seed originally sown 'after its kind,' as full of project for the little time remaining for practice, as when they were 'first acquent'—just beginning to suspect, perhaps, like Mr Spooner, when the mischief is done, that they had 'got wrong at the beginning, and were unable somehow to work round again;' surmising their want of wisdom; resolving and re-resolving to end as they commenced.

Here I was awakened from my day-dreaming by the waiter putting the gas out; and upon calling for my bill, discovered that while moralising upon the fallibility of resolution of Mr Spooner and humanity in general, I had extended the single cigar, to which I had vowed to confine myself, into a plurality, upon the precise extent of which, as I am giving up smoking, I refrain from expatiating; and my modest cup of coffee into more of the agreeable summer beverage which my friend had so emphatically denounced, than, unless I develop my own 'cheap trains' of idea a little more practically, the wisdom arising from them is ever likely to pay for.

#### ALEXANDER SMITH'S 'CITY POEMS.'

WHEN a poet's first book has been very successful, his second is hardly likely to get justice done to it. He is held responsible for all the exaggeration of enthusiastic admirers, who inevitably lead the way for disappointed purchasers. His claims are sternly challenged by all those whose dissenting voices were drowned in the general applause, and who have been lying in wait for any turn of the tide. Then, each of the various sections of the public, who supported the new author for the promise they found in his book, expects as a matter of course that he will fulfil his promise in their special direction, and according to their personal choice; whereas he must go his own way, and if he has made progress, and does not repeat himself, it will be in a new direction. The result is certain; his new strain will be responded to by a chorus of disappointment, and the author will be abused for not doing what he was expected to do, rather than fairly judged by what

\* *City Poems*. By Alexander Smith. Cambridge: Macmillan & Co. 1857.



he has done. Mr Smith's second venture was especially perilous, he had so large an amount of success to answer for. A poet whose first volume sold 10,000 copies at home, and 30,000 abroad, is not likely to come off scot-free a second time. Nevertheless, we believe that in the minds of all calm judges and fair dealers, these *City Poems* will be considered far superior to the *Life Drama*, and will win for their author more real honour. The detraction they have drawn down upon him will work less harm than did the loud folly of the injudicious and unskilled critics of his earlier effort.

The vagueness of the *Life Drama* became in the minds of many synonymous with vastness, and with such the present poems will appear poor in comparison, precisely because they are more within bounds. Those who overrated the one, will underrate the other.

But vagueness is not necessarily vastness, and law is a far higher thing than lawlessness. Similes, images, and jewels might have been gathered from the *Life Drama* as the Carthaginians gathered rings from the battle-field of Canne, by the bushful, so great was their profusion. These are used more sparingly in the *City Poems*, but with a far truer effect. The manner of the writer is much less spasmodic, by which we mean less sudden in transition from thought to thought, and from thing to thing. There is more homogeneity of style; greater mastery has rendered it malleable. And instead of our being so often blinded with a whirlwind of gold-dust, we see the gold flowing into form, calm, and sometimes strong, and often splendid. The author comes nigher to the business and the bosoms of men who think and suffer. The heat of passion is more covered in, and breaks out less in fancies of fire. Throughout, the poems impress us as being the work of a man who is honestly trying to do his best in all matters wherein he has any choice. He has pruned his lavish leafage and rank overgrowth, checked many extravagant tendencies, curbed his Pegasus when wantonly wayward or in a voluptuous vein; and for these things he is to be commended and encouraged. Many of his earlier admirers will desert him because he has not out-heroded Herod in the spasmodic sublime. They have yet to learn what Mr Smith appears to have learned, that the subtlest and deepest things in poetry do not leave us blinded, but illumined—not breathlessly startled so much as quietly content. He can afford to forego their cheers, having chosen the worthier way to fame, to be followed by the approbation of the wiser few. The great want of the new book is the want of new and varied experience of life. This is unfortunate, but no personal fault. A man who is not yet twenty-seven, and who is only just married, is not expected to reproduce the whole round of human experience. What we urge is, that he has done the best he could do for the time being, acquired more knowledge, purified his thinking, chastened his expression, and altogether improved his art; so that, when the new experience comes, as come it will with coming years, he can transmute it into song with a perfecter freedom, and a larger power.

With regard to the cry of plagiarism which has been raised, we have only to say, that it might be raised against the most original poet that ever lived. All young poets reproduce, more or less, the thoughts and images of others. Mr Smith has done this not more than many others, only his 'private eating' has been obvious. The young writer does not consciously take possession of the thoughts of others, so much as they unconsciously take possession of him, and compel him to reproduce them, in the faith that they are his own. He has so thoroughly felt them that they become, in fact, his own. Still, many of the thoughts and images in the *Life Drama*, which have been attributed to Wordsworth, Keats, and Tennyson, do not specially

belong to those poets, having been used by others before them, and become a sort of common property of thought, a portion of that stock which, when we meet with it, we recognise it as being somewhat the worse for wear; but we do not call in a detective, or start on any Quixotic crusade in search of the original possessor. Of course, we are now speaking only of that which has been ground down into the undistinguishable diamond-dust of thought, and not of those gems which every poet perfects as his own, and which will be identified as his wherever they are found. If a writer reproduce these, so much the worse for him, for they will tend to throw suspicion on whatsoever is really his own. Young authors whose memory is apt to play false, cannot be too jealously watchful in scrutinising whatever arises in their mind, and canvassing its claims to originality. Mr Smith's second book is far more original than was the first; and it would be a cruel discouragement if full credit were not given to him for an effort so entirely right. There are fewer startlingly fine things, but this we do not regret, the finest things are so apt not to be original. Generally, fine things only arrive at their perfection by passing through many minds, being touched by each; and when these come very thickly, they have more the look of being gathered than of being grown. Instead of these, there is more maturity, and often a quiet continuity of thought, and one or two touches of pathos, which give more certain sign of power than anything in the previous work. For example:

*The past is very tender at my heart;*

Full, as the memory of an ancient friend  
When once again we stand beside his grave.  
Raking amongst old papers thrown in haste  
'Mid useless lumber, unawares I came  
On a forgotten poem of my youth.

I went aside and read each faded page  
Warm with dead passion, sweet with buried Junes,  
*Filled with the light of suns that are no more,*  
I stood like one who finds a golden tress  
Given by loving hands no more on earth,  
And starts, beholding how the dust of years,  
Which dims all else, has never touched its light.

Then, again, we are reminded that few things can be finer than the conclusion of the following lines, although it does not startle us with surprise, but satisfies us with its sweetness:

Love, unreturned,  
Hath gracious uses; the keen pang departs,  
The sweetness never. Sorrow's touch doth ope  
A mingled fount of sweet and bitter tears,  
No summer's heat can dry, no winter's cold  
Lock up in ice. *When music grieves, the past  
Returns in tears.*

And surely the author sounds the deeps of feeling when he describes the mother, who in her mortal agony presses her dead child with more than the living love—

*And pours more passionate kisses on the lips  
Than when they kissed again.*

Here is true thought admirably expressed; musical in its movement, and beautiful in its repose:

We sit together at a rich man's feast,  
When, as if beckoned by an unseen hand,  
The man whose laugh is loudest in his cups  
Rises with a wild face, and goes away  
From mirth into a shroud without a word.  
With what pale faces, and how still they go!  
What visions see they, and what voices hear?  
We only know this buried root of life  
Holds still, it knows not why, within its heart  
A vague tradition of an upper light,  
To which it strives, and, dying, spent and foiled,  
It feebly feels it should have borne a flower  
'Neath some propitious heaven.

And while upon the subject of 'thought,' we may instance the following as an insight far beyond the raptures of the *Life Drama*, at once truthful, manly, and necessary, seeing that first love is not the only love with common flesh-and-blood humanity in this everyday world of ours:

Is this Love

An unseen god, whose voice is heard but once  
In youth's green valleys, ever dead and mute  
'Mong manhood's iron hills? A power that comes  
On the instant, whelming like the light that smote  
Saul from his horse; never a thing that draws  
Its exquisite being from the light of smiles,  
And low sweet tones, and fond companionship?  
Brothers and sisters grow up at our sides,  
Unfelt and silently are knit to us.

Would love not grow  
In the communion of long-wedded years?  
Would not an infant be the marriage priest  
To stand between us and unite our hands,  
And bid us love?

Such lines as these also shew that his Muse can walk with firmer feet:

With the invariable and dread advance  
Of midnight's starry armies, must we set  
Our foolish wandering hours.

And here is steadier grasp and subtler perception:

The right hand learns its cunning, and the feet  
That tread upon the rough ways of the world  
Grow mercifully callous.

Mr Smith is admirable in description; his pictures are often full of power and beauty, and equally felicitous, whether done at a stroke or two of broad-handling, or finished with delicate touches. We might fill a page or two with such as these:

A wide gray windy sea bespecked with foam.

A LANDSCAPE.

He lay upon a tower in leafy Kent  
Watching a lazy river; glorious leagues  
Of woods yet gleaming with a falling shower,  
O'er which a rainbow strode; a red-tiled town  
Set in a tender film of azure smoke,  
And here and there upon the little heights  
A wind-mill turning its preposterous arms.

FIRE.

That maniac, Fire, is loose; who was so tame,  
When little children looked into his face,  
He laughed and blinked within his prison-grate.  
His fit is on; the merry winking elf  
Has rushed into a hungry crimson fiend:  
Now he will seize a house, crush in the roof,  
And leap and dance above his prey.

ARRAN.

Change melts in finer change from clear green light  
To purple thunder-gloom.

HIGHLAND SCENERY.

O'er rude unthrifty wastes we held our way  
Whence never lark rose upward with a song,  
Where no flower lit the marsh: the only sights,  
The passage of a cloud—a thin blue smoke  
Far on the idle heath—now caught, now lost,  
The pink road wavering to the distant sky.  
At noon we rested near a mighty hill,  
That from our morning hut slept far away  
Azure and soft as air. Upon its sides  
The shepherds shouted 'mid a noise of dogs:  
A stream of sheep came slowly trickling down,  
Spread to a pool, then poured itself in haste.  
The sun sunk o'er a crimson fringe of hills:  
The violet evening filled the lower plain,

From which it upward crept and quenched the lights—  
A while the last peak burned in lingering rose,  
And then went out. We toiled at dead of night  
Through a deep glen, the while the lonely stars  
Trembled above the ridges of the hills;  
And in the utter hush the ear was filled  
With low sweet voices of a thousand streams,  
Some near, some far remote—faint trickling sounds  
That dwelt in the great solitude of night  
Upon the edge of silence. A sinking moon  
Hung on one side and filled the shattered place  
With gulfs of gloom, with floating shades, and threw  
A ghostly glimmer on wet rock and pool.

EYES LIGHTED WITH GENIUS.

That with their brightness held you from his face:  
The thought stood in them ere 'twas spoken; Wit  
Laughed on you from the windows ere she danced  
Out on you from the door.

THE FLOWER-POT ON THE WINDOW-SILL.

I dwelt within a gloomy court,  
Wherein did never sunbeam sport;  
Yet there my heart was stirred—  
My very blood did dance and thrill,  
When on my narrow window-sill,  
Spring lighted like a bird.

Tennyson has a very lovely image of the water-lily folding itself with the closing day:

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom, and be lost in me.

But we cannot afford to forego this simile of Mr Smith's because the image has been used before:

By sweet degrees

My slumberous being closed its weary leaves  
In drowsy bliss, and slowly sank in dream,  
As sinks the water-lily 'neath the wave.

If the author should think we have interpreted his book with sufficient sympathy to permit us to give a word or two of counsel for the future, we should say, let him write nothing until he is absolutely impelled—his mind 'being of child with glorious great intent'—and the subject within him, having been fed with the sunshine of spirit, and watered with the dews of the heart, is ripe for poetry. Then let him shape it as much as possible lyrically. We say this, because the most sustained, effective, and satisfactory things in the *City Poems* are the lyrics 'Barbara,' 'Glasgow,' and the 'Night before the Wedding.' These shew the afflatus, and ring with the certainty of true inspiration; they are more congruous, coherent, and concrete than the poems in blank verse. And for these reasons we think—blank verse offers fatal facilities for piecemeal work; it can be wrought like mosaic; but the lyric requires a more mounting and continuous impulse, a more lifted mood of mind, so that thought and feeling must flow in music; beside which, the restraints of rhyme, and varied verse, help to hold the poetic substance as in a crucible, until it is fused down to flowing-point in the opposing heat of the impelling power. Let him be on his guard against a vague generalisation, which sometimes nullifies the special truth previously uttered. For instance, after bewailing his lot in being shut up in a city far away from the mornings of spring in the country and the coloured glory of its summer world, in a sweeping generalisation at the end of the poem, he tells us that in the City's noise alone dwell

All raptures of this mortal breath.

If so, what becomes of the meaning of the poem, which is a sigh for raptures that do not dwell there?

He must also endeavour to check a tendency he has of flying off into space for reference to external nature, at the very moment that we require the culminating human interest. This is shewn in the last stanza of 'Barbara,' where the writer avoids the real difficulty, loses the crowning success, by reeling off into the air when near the top of the hill, and never touching it. He begins talking about the 'dreary hills,' 'fringe of rain,' and 'hurt and wounded sea'—the last being a vile tautological specimen of the 'pathetic fallacy,' where he ought to have given us the pathetic truth.

Our author has an evident personal predilection for the dramatic form; but we do not think he proves himself to be in possession of the dramatic faculty. He does not disguise himself behind the dramatic mask, and we easily recognise the exalted stature to be made up of him and the stilts; therefore, we should say, fling aside both mask and stilts, and do not trouble yourself about *dramatis personæ*, but utter what you have to say straight out in your own personal presence. And, lastly, when you have written your next book, before going to press, send the manuscript to your critic of the *Athenæum*, if you have any misgivings on the score of originality, and so make use of his detective talent by turning it to better account than he has done himself.

KIRKE WEBBE,  
THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.  
CHAPTER X.

NOTHING but the perfect guilelessness and candour of Clémence de Bonneville, associated in my illogical appreciation with the circumstances which appeared to place her claim to be the daughter of Mrs Waller beyond controversy, could have rendered me disregardful of the surprising aptness of discoveries or revelations following each other in such dramatic sequence. The seed-pearl necklace and other of the stolen child's articles of dress, carefully concealed during fourteen years, had been found a few days previous to my arrival at St Malo, in an armoire, of which Fanchette, suddenly overtaken by anxiety to find a brooch that had not been lost, possessed, or easily procured, a key! Fanchette, Mr Webbe's well-fed confederate, moreover, relates—attaching, however, in her ingenuous simplicity, no importance to the statement—that she had once heard a Dr Poitevin mention the remarkable anatomical fact which, a letter from Mrs Linwood placed in my hands ten minutes afterwards by the privateer captain, apprises me is the infallible test by which the most cunningly concocted attempt at fraudulent personation would be exposed and defeated! Not, by the way, in my hands, and under the actual circumstances, could that test prove so instantly decisive. Dr Poitevin, I ascertained, had been dead some months; and it was out of the question that I should insist upon a young lady having her ribs scientifically counted for my especial satisfaction! I doubted that Clémence herself, being, if anything, the plumpest of us two, could do so with accuracy, for I certainly could not mine; and after many trials, was unable, for the life of me, to determine whether popular belief and Jeremy Taylor were correct or not, in insisting that, since Adam, every man was minus one, taken for the creation of his better-half, 'from nearest his heart that he may love, from under his arm that he may protect her.' Fanchette was, however, fully corroborated by Clémence, before whom, by way of proposing the question in as seemingly a manner as possible, I placed Mrs Linwood's letter, with the passage I have quoted strongly underlined.

'Ah, it is very true!' exclaimed the sweet girl with a charming blush and smile, after glancing at the lines.

'Dr Poitevin declared so when I was ill of the fever.'

'Dr Poitevin declared so in your hearing, dear Clémence?'

'O yes!—or, stay; let me reflect a moment. Certainly,' she presently added, 'it seems to me that he must have done so; but it is a long time since, and having frequently heard Fanchette and maman mention the doctor's remark, I may, you know, have come to erroneously imagine that I heard it from his own lips.'

'Be that as it may, I have not the slightest doubt, believe me, of the fact,' was my reply. Nor had I; and it was that intimate conviction which rendered me contemptuously indifferent to the clumsily cunning artifices employed to confirm a truth, so manifest to my apprehension, that disbelief was impossible. Webbe had persuaded or terrified Louise Féron into restoring Lucy Hamblin to her mother, and he had adopted a deceptive, roundabout method of carrying their mutual purpose into effect, in order to enhance the value and consequent reward of his services—a reward which Féron was of course to share. To be sure, this hypothesis did not account for Webbe's unappeasable anxiety to have us married before leaving France; but he might be really afraid that Clémence—innocent as myself of all that underhand, behind-the-scenes work—would refuse to abandon her actual home except under the protection of a husband; in which case, Webbe would be under the disagreeable necessity of confessing that the difficulties and dangers attendant upon our enterprise were, primarily, of his own seeking. Subsequently, indeed, when summoning to the session of calmer thoughts, the mass of confused and contradictory statement with which my ears had been filled by Webbe, the fallacy of such reasoning appeared palpable enough; but at the time, the strong impression upon my mind must have been as stated—a density of apprehension, which the ascertainment beyond doubt that proofs of the abduction by Louise Féron of the child my father was accused of having drowned, were really extant, within reach, if I blundered not, of my eager, trembling hand, may, by monopolising all my perceptive and reasoning faculties, have considerably aggravated.

To the same absorbing pre-occupation of mind must also, in fairness, be attributed another manifestation of perceptive obtuseness, the recollection of which, though the frosts of three-and-forty winters have since then chastened my pulse and cooled my blood, causes me even now, as I write, to glow and reddened to my fingers' ends; and which, but that its omission would obscure my narrative, should certainly remain untold.

It will be readily believed that I deeply sympathised with the gentle-hearted Clémence, not only because of the grievous, irreparable wrong she had sustained by being stolen in her infancy from a loving parent and wealthy home, and subjected during twice seven years to comparative indigence and stern control; but with her deep sorrow at discovering that the woman whom she had loved as a mother was wholly unworthy of an affection, which she could not, as her tears testified whenever the subject was touched upon, subdue at will, or readily transfer to another.

Well, I expressed that natural sympathy with a warmth which it never once occurred to me would be almost certainly misconstrued, coming from a young man to a still younger maiden, who, concurrently with that young man's appearance upon the scene, had discarded a former lover. The reader is already aware that I was mightily free with such expressions as 'Dear Clémence'—that my tears mingled with those of the sobbing girl whose drooping head rested upon my shoulder. Other endearing, innocent familiarities recur to memory as I write; of which the legitimate interpretation and tendency was all unperceived by me during the first intoxication of spirit excited by the achieved success, as I supposed, of the momentous mission with which I was intrusted.



The only excuse I could make to myself when Webbe, affecting to look as fierce as a dragon whose golden fruit had been filched whilst he slumbered over his charge, called my attention to the obvious result of my thoughtless conduct, was that I could not, under any circumstances, have imagined the possibility of such a catastrophe. My previous intercourse with the better sex afforded no warning of the peril I incurred of inadvertently awakening the susceptibilities of young and gentle hearts. The damsels of the Wight must have been strangely unimpressible, seeing that, in the words of the old song,

I had kissed and had prattled with fifty fair maids,  
And changed them as often, d'y'e see—

and the deuce of one of them had, to my knowledge, cared a straw about the matter! There was, indeed, every excuse for my inconsiderate behaviour, for, good Heaven! who that saw me come shining forth in the trim previously described, save that pale blue replaced bright yellow pants, from the Hôtel de l'Empire upon those unfortunate visits, could have believed that such a Guy might, by possibility, agitate, except with laughter, the most sensitive of maiden's hearts!

Yet, I could not deny the flattering impeachment. It was only too true that the dear girl's charming spirits had wholly forsaken her—that her appetite was gone—that at the slightest hint of the peremptory necessity of flight from St Malo before Madame de Bonneville's return, her complexion was one moment celestial rosy red, the next, pale as the lily. Too true that her soft eyes were constantly suffused with tears, and that, when speaking to me, her voice was inexpressibly tender and caressive—her smile so sad, so pitiful, that it would have touched the heart of a tiger!

And this moral ruin was my unconscious work! So at least declared Webbe, who had frequent private interviews with her. The conflict between love and maidenly pride was destroying her, and, unless I soothed that wounded pride by feigning to reciprocate her love, I had discovered Mrs Waller's long-lost daughter only to consign her to an untimely grave!

This was a delightful dilemma to find one's self suddenly placed in; and how to act I knew not. I essayed what effect a total change of demeanour on my part might have; substituted, during two whole days, moroseness, gloom, fretfulness, for the winning ways which must—it could be nothing else—have led captive her too yielding soul. Bah! The infatuated girl was more tearful, tender, caressive than ever.

Meanwhile, time pressed. Madame de Bonneville would soon return; and Captain Webbe, who was getting perfectly ferocious, could not remain with safety to himself forty-eight hours longer in St Malo; whilst to every hint of flight, dear, susceptible Clémence replied by a burst of tears!

Now, what, in such a case, let me ask the candid reader, could I do? A young fellow may live over twenty years unscathed by the tender passion, and yet not have a heart of adamant. Mine, at all events, though not pierceable by any power of Cupid, as I believed—having in that regard all my troubles, like a young bear, to come—was not insensible to the pleadings of generosity and compassion; and after much woful cogitation, I made up my mind to capitulate—upon terms. As thus:

Having in the process spoiled about a quire of paper, I achieved a note, in which, after expressing the esteem and admiration I felt for the young lady, in terms sufficiently general to be literally true, but which Clémence would no doubt read and interpret by the fervid light of her own ardent feelings, I expressed a hope of being permitted to more formally declare how essential her favour was to my future happiness, when she, being restored to her true home, and having

realised the vast change in social position that awaited her, I could do so without incurring the suspicion of attempting to surprise her into an acceptance of my suit before she had been able to appreciate that change of position, or take counsel of her parents.

This I thought very clever, inasmuch as it would leave her at liberty, after reaching London, to take a fancy to somebody else; and it would be odd indeed if she did not then meet with some one she would prefer to me! Hitherto, she had practically the choice only of Jacques Sicard and myself, which could not, of course, be doubtful; but Miss Hamblin, daughter and heiress of the Wallers of Cavendish Square, would have a wide circle of eligible admirers, in the blaze of whose adulation her slightly rooted liking for me would, I earnestly hoped, wither up and disappear.

I was myself the bearer of the note; and finding her at home, and disengaged, I placed it in the young lady's hands, with a whispered intimation that I would, with permission, see her again in the evening. She seemed to instinctively comprehend that I had brought her a declaration; and the dear, sensitive girl would, I feared, have fainted with the violence of an emotion that as often arises from sudden joy as grief. She, however, by a strong effort, mastered her feelings, and I took hasty leave.

This occurred at about one o'clock in the day; and as the dinner-hour was still three hours distant, and I felt extremely fidgety, ill at ease, dissatisfied with myself, I left the hotel for a stroll on the ramparts. The day was fine and mild, though we were but in the second week of March; and it being some imperial anniversary or other, soldiers were parading, and military bands playing there. Besides, I should be pretty sure to fall in with Webbe, whom I was particularly anxious to have a word with before he again saw Clémence, or, as I should say—Lucy.

Whom should I see upon the ramparts but Jacques Sicard, on duty as a lieutenant in the National Guard, and really a smart-looking officer! I should hardly have recognised him in such splendid guise, but for the glance he shot at me of dislike and disdain, fiercely expressive, moreover, of an inclination, restrained only by the bonds of military discipline, to then and there inflict exemplary chastisement upon the presumptuous rustic that had dared to thrust his insignificance between Mademoiselle de Bonneville and Monsieur Sicard, an established bottier, de Paris même! Poor fellow, thought I, if you knew but all!

I found Webbe with his old friend Delisle, and Mr Tyler, his recent acquaintance, to whom I was introduced as 'My nephew, Monsieur Jean Le Gros.' Webbe was in a jocular mood; he had just taken a rise out of the American shipowner, anent some foolish vapouring by that gentleman relative to a Yankee frigate-victory over the Britishers. Few could do that with more causticity than Webbe; and Mr Tyler, one could see at a glance, was dreadfully ryled and wrathful. Nevertheless, he and the privateer captain exchanged an apparently hearty business hand grasp, and Webbe returned with me to the Hôtel de l'Empire.

I told him that I had made Clémence a formal offer, and that I was to see her again in the evening, but without entering into particulars. He was hugely delighted at the news. 'Henceforth,' he said, 'all will be plain sailing, and the necessity I am under of leaving St Malo the day after to-morrow, can have no hurtful consequence.'

'But zounds, young man,' he exclaimed, 'you are strangely down in the mouth for a valiant hero and successful lover! I suppose, however, that Shakspeare's remark—

Between the acting of a dreadful thing,  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream—

applies as forcibly to marriage as to murder. We

can't then, I think, do better than strive to solace the few hours we have yet to pass together, with brandy, cigars, and a fire; if a fire be obtainable at this hour of the day in a French hotel.'

Brandy, cigars, and a fire were supplied, and Mr Webbe favoured me with a programme of the arrangements that, in contemplation of my acquiescence before it was too late in the marital preliminary—failing which, nothing could be done—he had concerted with Fanchette. The essential points were, that the marriage was to be privately celebrated by a priest, spoken with or retained for that purpose; that on the evening of the bridal-day, I, the bride, and Fanchette, should set out by diligence for Granville, and on arriving there, lose not a moment in betaking ourselves to the dwelling of Baptiste, who had a lugger-boat in waiting to convey us to Jersey, where we should in all probability meet Captain Webbe himself.

Webbe's boisterous glee whilst running over these interesting details grated on my ear, like the exulting scoff of a victor. It was evident he knew that Clémence could not leave St Malo except as my wife, and after that clever note of mine, a refusal to marry her would be absurd. These comfortable reflections did anything but raise my spirits, which Webbe perceiving, he proposed to redeem his promise of placing me in possession of the how and why he became Captain Jules Renaudin.

'That will do,' I said; 'go on.'

'Of course, anything would do that promised to lighten the sadness which lengthens Romeo's hours'—

'Pish! Pray, let me have your story, Mr Webbe, without other frippery or garniture than is inseparably inwoven with the woof and warp of the story itself.'

'You are a trifle waspish, my young friend. But that, taking into account the afflictive tortures of suspense you are now of course suffering— Don't, for Heaven's sake, jump up and jabber in that frantic fashion, Linwood. Really you are the most touchy popgun I ever handled. However, if a plain tale will put you down, be reseated at once, for here you have it, without further preface.'

'Once upon a time,' proceeded Webbe, 'I was a strictly orthodox privateer. I slew and pillaged upon the high seas only those whom the *London Gazette* proclaimed to be natural enemies, and the articles of war, and thanksgiving-for-victory sermons, enjoined all loyal subjects and Christian men to sink, burn, or otherwise destroy to the extent of their ability. Days of innocence and virtue, whither have ye fled! Shall I never again feel the sweet serenity of soul which attended upon the consciousness of knowing that the fellows I blew to kingdom come were natural enemies; that the cargoes I made prize of only ruined rascals that had the impiety to be born out of God-fearing, orthodox England'—

'Mr Webbe, I am rather crabbed in temper just now, and mouthy attempts to confound legitimate, loyal war with piracy—your persiflage means that or nothing—will only increase that irritation. Either let me hear your "plain tale," or hold your peace: I am indifferent which, to be quite candid.'

'Your politeness, I have before observed, Master Linwood, is, for your years, surprising. Nevertheless, as I happen just now to be in quite a heavenly frame of mind, I readily excuse an infirmity which, judging from your very bilious aspect, must be more offensive to its owner than to any one else. Seriously, though, I can't believe you have reason to be so nervously apprehensive that Clémence will have the cruelty to refuse— There, there, don't jump out of the window or into the fire, and I'll steer as steadily as a flat broad-bottomed Dutchman.'

'Once upon a time, then, as before explained, I was a strictly orthodox privateer; and for several years

orthodoxy and a full purse kept, as is their natural wont, each other company. But all that's bright must fade; and slowly but surely the blockade of continental ports, constantly increasing in rigour and effectiveness, by the British cruisers, frightfully diminished the profits of that respectable line of business. Things, however, were not come by a long way to their present miserable pass ten years ago, or thereabout, when the baptism of fire and flood by which I became a child of France and a sharer in the glory of "*Les Victoires et Conquêtes des Français*" took place. It was precisely at the time when Bonaparte, whose blazing star now seems so near its final setting, had assembled an immense army in the neighbourhood of Boulogne for the invasion of England. There is an old one-armed capitaine de corvette,' continued Webbe, with out-lauding gaiety of heart, '*living en retraite at Avranches*, and who, by the by, was present at that blessed banquet, who has often explained to me how that little affair would, should, must, according to all scientific rules—but for one or two provoking illogical accidents—have come off. Had Villeneuve, he used to explain, persisted, in accordance with his bounden duty and positive instructions, in coaxing Nelson to continue seeking for him where he could not be found; and if Calder had not fallen in with and crippled a division of the French fleet, that fleet, favoured by a steady favourable breeze, would have safely convoyed the French troops across the unguarded Channel to the shores of Albion, and landed them quietly there, in excellent condition. Those soldiers, as definitively arranged in the imperial programme, would, on the following day, have beaten, pulverised the English army; London would have been sacked, the House of Guelph and the British constitution abolished; England, Scotland, Wales, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed parcelled out into departments, and the great emperor and the grand army have got safely back to France, whilst the British fleets were nowhere! A humbling lesson to the sublimity of intellect,' added Mr Webbe, 'to reflect that one or two wretched accidents should have power to disconcert the most splendid conception of genius that has dazzled mankind since the days of that royal peer whose breeches cost him but a crown, which he held sixpence all too dear, and'—

'Confound your ceaseless nonsense! It is irritating enough at all times, but especially so when the mind, torn, lacerated by conflicting doubts and fears, is'—

'Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,' interjected Webbe. 'Just so. I remember that in the days of my youth, my own mind was in a similar condition, arising, in my case, from my being reduced for several weeks to a diet of weevily biscuits and foul cockroachy water, and not an over-supply of that—I've done—I've done. Stay where you are, and I'll run the remainder of the story off the reel without a hitch.'

'Once upon a time, I resume—that time, as aforesaid—I was unsuccessfully dodging about in the *Wasp*, privateer—a craft of about the same tonnage and armament as the *Scout*—off Ushant, till early one morning, it then blowing half a gale of wind, with every sign of more hands being clapped on to the bellows, when a large schooner hove in sight. We took her to be a French or Spanish merchantman—a mistake, as we too late discovered. The schooner was, in fact, the privateer *Passe-partout*—a queer name, given her by her somewhat famous captain, Jules Renaudin—an unconscionable individual, who, not content with the exalted glory of being blown up with the *Orient*, of which he was a petty officer, at the Nile, had got himself appointed commander of the said *Passe-partout*, not so much with a view to commercial profit, as for the ungrateful purpose of having a shy at the nation that had given him such a hoist in life.'

'You may depend upon it,' continued Webbe, 'that if I had known my customer, I should have given the *Passe-partout* a very wide berth. Gain, not glory, is the object of every privateer captain that understands his business. Fighting is not our vocation, and should always be avoided, unless the prize is not only well worth the powder, but pretty sure to be won, at little cost. That was far from being the case with the *Passe-partout*, from which nothing but hard knocks was to be looked for. There was, however, no help for it, so at it we went ding-dong, and continued blazing away at each other for perhaps half an hour, when the *Passe-partout* caught fire—by what chance was never known—and ten minutes afterwards, blew up. There was so wild a sea running, that we could only pick up nine of the unfortunate Frenchmen, amongst whom was Captain Renaudin himself, dreadfully scorched and otherwise injured.

'Our own condition was a perilous one. The enemy's shot had told with terrible effect upon both the hull and spars of the *Wasp*. She made water fast; and during the following night, the gale having meanwhile increased to a hurricane, both the masts, which had been badly wounded, went by the board. We managed to rig up a jury-mast; the men worked bravely at the pumps; and by the middle of the third day after the fight, the *Wasp* had so far staggered—unguidedly staggered up Channel, that she was off Gris Nez, a point northward of Boulogne. By that time the pumps had become unserviceable; the jury-mast and a portion of the bulwarks had been swept away, and the raging sea made a clean breach over the struggling, straining ship, which no one but myself believed would float an hour longer. That was not my opinion, because I had noticed that for some time she had not sunk deeper in the water, whence I concluded that the leak was effectually choked by some substance, one of the sails probably, flung overboard for that purpose, having been sucked into the opening. No argument or persuasion could, however, persuade the men to remain; and as the *Wasp's* boats had sustained no material injury, the English crew, which, fortunately as it had turned out, were far short of the usual complement, took to them, happily without accident, though the operation was a very ticklish one, and pulled off, after vainly entreating me to accompany them, for the English coast. They were soon lost sight of; and next the French prisoners determined on trying their luck in a small boat, which had belonged to the unlucky *Passe-partout*. Renaudin was dying, and could not be removed. It was as well so, for the boat had not gone two hundred yards from the brig, when she capsized, and every man in her was swallowed up in the raging waters.

'The *Wasp*, though buried in the sea, still floated, and would no doubt continue to do so if she were not flung upon the shore, or bumped against one of the numerous rocks thereabout. During the night, Renaudin died; and when morning dawned, I was consequently the only living man on board. The tempest had meanwhile greatly abated; and as the day grew stronger and clearer, I saw that the brig had drifted considerably southward, was then off Boulogne, and that numerous telescopes were directed towards her from that place. Renewed hope—I may say renewed assurance of life, once more pulsated vigorously in my veins, and I began casting about as to how I could best turn to account the fortunate deliverance which seemed to be at hand. I soon made up my mind, and the more speedily from seeing that boats were preparing to put off from Boulogne for the dismantled brig. I stripped Renaudin, bundled the body overboard, arrayed myself in his clothes, managed to fasten a tricolor to the mizen-stump, and awaited my deliverance. It was not long delayed. The heroic Renaudin was safely conveyed on shore, and so

sedulously ministered to, that on the following day he was able to favour his admiring auditors with the charming story published in *Les Victoires et Conquêtes*, under the head of "Le *Passe-partout* et Le *Wasp*."

'How he, Jules Renaudin, had engaged the British privateer off Ushant, in the *Passe-partout*, which, taking fire during the engagement, had left him and his gallant sailors no other chance of success other than that of taking to the boats and boarding the enemy. That was done; and victory, faithful to the glorious tricolor, crowned the audacious attempt. Then came the tempest; and Captain Renaudin related how it happened that the French and English crews persisting, spite of his commands and supplications, to quit the ship, had all miserably perished.

'This,' said Webbe, 'is a meagre outline of the precious plan which I, under stress of utter ruin and a French prison, extemporised, and, helped by my knowledge of poor Renaudin's antecedents, derived from broken conversations with him since he had been on board the *Wasp*, nicely filled up and rounded off with many interesting details, to the great satisfaction of an applauding auditory. Renaudin was, I knew, personally unknown in Northern France, or I might hardly have risked so audacious a ruse. It succeeded, fortunately, to admiration. I was flattered, fêted, a handsome subscription was raised for me, and the hull and stores of the *Wasp*, which was cast on shore during the night, were sold for my benefit. Admiral Ducos, the French minister of marine, visited, warmly complimented me, and in frank compliance with a suggestion of some of my new friends, penned a certificate—I will shew it you some day—which sets forth that the bearer, Jules Renaudin, formerly one of the équipage of *L'Orient*, is a gallant seaman, who has deserved well of France and of all Frenchmen. I went in,' added Webbe, 'for the cross of the Legion of Honour; but Napoleon happening to be extremely busy just then with his own pet make-believe, mine missed that distinguished recognition, which was a pity. Still, I had done pretty well under the very awkward circumstances; and I have since, off and on, played in the honoured name of Renaudin a fairly successful, but deucedly delicate game, which I am not at all sorry is fast drawing towards a close. And now, my dear Linwood, we will, with your permission, adjourn to the table d'hôte—Ah! you have no appetite! The idea of dinner even disgusts a sensitive organisation, over which the divine passion exercises just now despotic influence.'

'Go to the devil!'

'All in good time. Meanwhile, may I ask the favour of being informed, as soon as you return from the charming, and, I will hope, not inexorably cruel Clémence, how— Have a care, my dear fellow, homicide, even if effected with a decanter, is punishable in this country by the galleys! Good-bye. My compliments to dear Clémence.'

#### ELECTRO-METALLURGY.

LAST year, we introduced to our readers a simplified method of silvering, by the electric process, all articles of household use, now known as 'substitutes for silver,' and also of replating worn-out Sheffield ware, &c. We are gratified to know that attention has been extensively drawn to this subject in its domestic application; and we think it only due to our pupils to lay before them now some results of our further experience, and to lead them on to new applications of this attractive and really useful art. We shall, in as small a compass as possible, endeavour to render the present paper a manual for those who may be disposed, even now, to make a beginning, as



well as a useful supplement to what we have written before.

Our system is based upon the idea of employing only such *apparatus* as may be found in almost any inhabited house, as being both the safest and most economical; and of giving such plain directions for manipulation, as still further to remove the difficulties which would deter the domestic practitioner from applying to the art of silvering. We omit all scientific explanations here, and come at once to the practical details.

To prepare the silver bath, chloride of silver is necessary. The best general direction for obtaining this is to purchase the *crystallised nitrate* of silver, the price of which is now more moderate than formerly; dissolve it in water, just sufficient, in a decanter, and then fill up the decanter with strong salt and water. This will precipitate the chloride in a white sediment. Let it settle, and carefully pour off the water. The same result, so far, may be obtained a little cheaper, by dissolving bits of old silver, or small silver coins, in nitric acid, and precipitating the chloride from the solution as above. For this purpose, the acid must *not* be chemically pure; and it is best to dilute it with water—about 1 of water to 4 of acid—and put, say one ounce of silver to four ounces of the diluted acid in a large bottle or decanter; and apply a little heat by placing it in a sauce-pan of hot water. As a certain effervescence takes place at times, it is well to have good room in the bottle, to prevent loss by overflowing. Avoid the fumes which arise from it, and let it stand until all bubbling from the metal has ceased. If all the silver is not dissolved, add more acid, and so on until it is so; then fill up with salt and water, to obtain the chloride, which must be washed six or eight times with fresh water. We think, on the whole, that the former of these methods—that with the purchased nitrate—is, in general, preferable; but, being accustomed to it, we ourselves adopt the latter method. An ounce of silver dissolved, we consider about equivalent to one and a half ounce of bought nitrate; and the chloride from either will take twelve to sixteen ounces of yellow prussiate of potash, and about three or four common bottles of water. They should be put together as soon as possible, and boiled gently in a clean tin vessel, for about twenty minutes to half an hour. Extreme accuracy in these details is not important. The object is to get potash enough to dissolve the silver; but no harm is done by having more; and, when desired, an ounce of silver will make a gallon of bath, as well as a smaller quantity.

When the boiling is over, the liquid must be allowed to settle in pigs or bottles, and the clear liquor poured off for use. We recommend keeping it in bottles. The dregs must be put together, a little water added, allowed to settle again, and poured off; and a third washing of the dregs may be made in this way, to prevent loss of silver; and all articles should be carefully washed before being returned to domestic use.

In a former article, we entered slightly upon the important subject of the bath itself; we suggested a common delf foot-bath, such as are found in most houses; and since then, we have used one ourselves with great satisfaction. But we found that the liquid penetrated the delf, the salt rising in crystals on the outside; so that, while we know nothing better as a

bath than delf, it must be prepared with a proper coating on the inside before using. Stoneware is not liable to this objection, not being porous; but it is very easy to prepare the foot-bath with a composition made as follows:

Take two parts—say ounces—of resin, one of yellow bees-wax, two of finely pulverised (washed) yellow ochre; beat these together in a pipkin; let your bath be quite dry, and give it several thin coats of the mixture with a brush. This will render also common crockery, and even wooden or tin vessels, as good for the purpose as delf; but care must be taken to renew the coating of tin vessels, if it should happen to be rubbed off. An ingenious person might make an excellent bath of sheet *gutta-percha*, but we have not tried it ourselves. Also our attention has lately been drawn to an array of earthenware vessels of the common glazed sort, which would answer admirably as baths, if properly prepared with the above composition. As this ware is very cheap, we should be disposed to recommend its use, so prepared, for all the purposes for which a bath is required on the large scale. It is best to have plenty of room for the complete immersion of large objects.

A practical difficulty is, how to suspend the articles in the liquid, when they are large; and we shall endeavour to describe a contrivance by which to overcome it.

Supposing the bath established on a shelf or table. Set up at each side of it an upright piece of board, secured to the table by an 'angle bit' of wood or tin, some inches higher than the bath itself. Each piece should have a hole, through which a strong iron or brass wire may be passed, so as to overhang the bath. From this wire, at one end, suspend the tube of the pile, either by cords or as follows: take a common lamp chimney-glass, and tie strongly a bit of wet bladder on one end of it; tie to the other end, *outside*, a strong slip of tin or zinc five or six inches long; bend this so as to hook on to the wire, and allow the bladder-end to be immersed, some inches at least, in the liquid bath. The zinc of the pile itself should be suspended, of course, in this glass tube, and should consist of strips of sheet zinc, so long as to go down *nearly* to the bottom of the tube, and to hook on also to the iron wire; or shorter bits may be hung from a brass or copper wire, which should itself be twisted round the principal wire. It may be well to add, that the glass tube should be nearly filled with salt and water.

It will be seen that the main wire is thus in connection with the pile; and that any object hung from it into the liquid bath will be so as well. It is only necessary, then, to suspend by wires *from it* whatever is to be plated; and for this its strength and position afford great facilities. It must be recollected that all the wires to be used should be kept free from rust, which may easily be done by using a little sand or emery paper.

It is important to understand the principle on which the regulation of the electricity depends.

The effect produced in a given time will depend upon the relations to each other of three different agencies: these are—the surface of zinc exposed in the pile, the strength of the saline solution in the tube, and the metallic strength of the bath.

By attending to one of these only, we can retain entire command over the whole process—that is, by exposing more or less zinc in the tube, we can regulate the electric current. Taking the slips of zinc at one inch wide, we should say that a slip of four inches, immersed in the tube, will suffice for a gallon of bath; and so on in proportion either way. One tube will do for several gallons, but it may be necessary to use several bits of zinc. The usual fault of

beginners is, that they go too fast, using too much electricity, when employing the simple pile. We have found, on further trials, that on the principle we are now explaining, the current may be so weakened that the work may be left for many hours without injury, with this as well as with Daniell's pile. Thus, we should expose, not *four*, but *one* inch of zinc per gallon in such a case; and if, after leaving it all night, there was much deadness in the plating done, we should expose less another time; but we should not venture to leave it so long without first ascertaining, by practice, what four, five, or six hours would effect. It must not be forgotten that, when a stronger current is used, the objects should be taken out frequently, and rubbed clean and bright. It is impossible to say beforehand how often; but it may easily be known by observing when the surface assumes the dead-white or frosted look.

A word about metals and their preparation. We gave, formerly, a mode of making the acidulated mercurial preparation. It may also be made by purchasing a little nitrate of mercury at the chemist's, and dissolving it in water, adding a few drops of nitric acid. When enough of acid is added, the liquid gives a bright silvery colour to any metal on which it is laid. It is the result of our experience, that, while the substitutes, known under various names, may be plated *thinly* without this preparation—and, of course, require renewal frequently—it would be impossible to lay on them a *strong* coat of silver without it. It is, therefore, in our opinion an invaluable substance in connection with our art, and its cost is quite inappreciable.

With this preparation, any one of the metals alluded to may be plated to any thickness desired; but we still object strongly to the use of albat and all the inferior sorts. Their points and edges will, sooner or later, come through even the thick and expensive coating given by the great houses, and then the contrast of colour spoils the whole. By using the best nickel silver or argentine, the goods will wear but evenly to the last; but for the benefit of those who possess albat—a veritable *lucus a non lucendo*—and do not wish to sell it as old metal, and purchase the better sorts for plating upon, we have recently experimented upon the subject of nickelisation, under the impression that if a *strong* coating of nickel itself is given in the first instance, it will, at small cost, add greatly to the durability of the plated goods afterwards. After various trials, we have succeeded in our object: our difficulty was to obtain a good adhesion, for the precipitation of nickel from a solution of one of its salts is easy enough. The salt employed is the 'ammoniacal sulphate of protoxide of nickel,' dissolved in water, to which we add about a tenth of silver bath. In this way, and by not using too strong a current, we have obtained a good and adhesive coating of the nickel. Its use, previously to plating, must remove, so far, the objection to the yellower metals. We use the above mercurial preparation even for brass and copper; not that it is necessary for adhesion, but we think that it preserves the purity of the bath, and prevents the metals being dissolved when first immersed. Of course, the nickelised goods must be prepared in the same way before plating.

We would remind our readers that vast quantities of handsome Sheffield ware are annually broken up for the sake of the metals it contains; the copper surfaces being quite exposed, while the silver edges are still perfect. We have at present a really beautiful cruet-stand in use, which we purchased some months ago, in that state, for the price of the bottles, the seller throwing in the frame as a *bonus*. It may have taken five or six shillings worth of silver to give it a very strong coating, as it is a large article; and, with fair usage, it will now last a very long time. Most of the Sheffield

ware is of fine design and pattern, and it is a great pity to allow it to be lost. This may be a good place to observe that servants appear to be in the habit of grossly misusing plated ware. We have seen handsome ware, which looked as if all the silver had been rubbed off with sand or coal-ashes. Housekeepers should remember that it is not enough that plate-powders should not contain mercury; they should also be carefully prepared in impalpable powder—say, one part of tripoli to two of whiting—and very sparingly used. If plate is well washed with soap and water, and wiped dry, a very little cleaning with leather and powder will suffice. It may also be useful to observe that, in cases where a little copper appears on the angles of plated goods—and it may not be possible to replating them—they may be used by touching the coppery parts with a little of the mercurial liquid described above.

Such is the famous 'silver solution,' sold at about two shillings the ounce bottle by vendors in London and Paris, at a profit of about 500 per cent., if not more. Its effect is only for a day or two, but it can be laid on again in a few minutes; and when made at home, costs almost nothing, and so may have its place as an economic agent.

#### 'IN REMEMBRANCE OF DOUGLAS JERROLD.'

At the death of Mr Jerrold in June last, it was understood that his surviving family were left in a condition far short of penury, but which yet scarcely reached that pitch of comfort in which the friends and admirers of the deceased were anxious to see them placed. In these circumstances, Mr Charles Dickens came forward, and, with the assistance of a number of literary and other friends, gave a series of amateur theatrical performances, readings, and lectures, as he delicately said, 'in remembrance of Douglas Jerrold.' These were so heartily patronised by the public, that before the end of August two thousand pounds had been realised and expended in the purchase of a government annuity for Mrs Jerrold and her unmarried daughter.

Taking this pleasant little affair in connection with the similar exertions made by Mr Thackeray and others not long since in behalf of the widow of Angus B. Reach, we feel prompted to remark the increased power and influence of literary men in our day, and the greatly improved mutual feeling now existing amongst them. Forty years ago, there was neither this power for good, nor the inclination so to use it. In an earlier age, the descendants even of a Milton had to be sought for after a few years in the haunts of humble life. Now, a Dickens or a Thackeray comes in like an angelic messenger, and with the loving heart of one, to re-illumine the desolated hearth of their less fortunate literary *confères*. Nothing, we believe, could be further from the hearts of these men than the desire to see their acts of this kind noted; but it has appeared to us that the Jerrold Remembrance in particular was too remarkable a feature of literary life in our day to be passed over in silence. We, after all, use not a word of mere praise; we desire to raise no roll of applause. We only congratulate Mr Dickens, that, in addition to all the results of his well-earned literary fame, he can reckon on the power of effecting so much good to his fellow-creatures.

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